

## **WAIKATO THEATRE PROJECT ASSESSMENT OF MAORI VALUES**

### **Te Haa O Te Whenua Kirikiriroa**

Te Haa O Te Whenua O Kirikiriroa (THAWK) stands for the maori people who 'speak for the land' upon which Hamilton City is situated. Those maori people comprise representatives from 5 of the 33 Waikato-Tainui Hapuu who maintain that they have strong connections to the land, ie: The Mana O Te Whenua or referred to as the Manawhenua'. Those 5 hapuu include Ngati Wairere, Ngati Haua, Ngati Koroki Kahukura, Ngati Mahanga and Ngati Tamainupo. In terms of developments on the land of Hamilton City which pierce the land, Thawk provides Cultural advice and appropriate resolutionary mitigations that help ensure the Cultural Safety aspects of the development to all concerned. Those aspects are based upon the following values.

### **THAWK values / Tikanga**

Thawk being comprised of 5 hapuu, is a maori organisation whose values are based on tikanga maori, both as an organisation and in its deliberations and actions. Such values include Whanaungatanga, Manaakitanga, Kaitiakitanga, Wairuatanga, Kotahitanga, Matauranga Rangimarie and Mana Whakahaere to name a few. As maori we have a unique sense of our cultural landscape. It includes our Past, Present and Future as well as our Physical and Spiritual dimensions. It is how we express ourselves in our environments. It connects Whanau, Whenua, Awa and Moana through Whakapapa. It includes both Rural and Urban, it is not where we live, it is who we are.

### **Cultural Landscape**

The Waikato River played a vital role in providing access and food resources for Waikato Maori, the land itself was also utilised and this is evidenced in the numerous archaeological sites and known traditional sites of significance to maori in the area. Alluvial terraces produced rich soils, and these were used for gardening and cultivation near watercourses. Early maori settlements throughout the Waikato were primarily established near shorelines and major rivers and were occupied either long-term, seasonally, or temporarily, according to the availability of food resources.

On the western side of the Waikato River a fortified village (pa) was established by Ngati Wairere which was known as Kirikiriroa (meaning 'long strip of cultivated land' or 'long gravel bar'). Kirikiriroa Pa was situated between what is now London and Bryce Streets, and was protected by natural defences, including steep banks on the river side and a swampy gully, as well as constructed palisades on the western side. The site supported gardens, and possibly a plantation, which were associated with the cultivation of kumara. Urupa, or burial grounds, were also present at sites along the Waikato River.

It was the custom for the remains of people who died at (Kirikiriroa) pa to be deposited in urupa close to the pa, or within naturally formed caves in the banks of the river. Maori history recalls that bones were removed from the urupa and relocated to other places. During the development of Hamilton City many of the traditional burial sites were destroyed by house or building construction.

## **Application**

Development of a new theatre complex called the Waikato Regional Theatre Project, is proposed at 170 and 198 Victoria Street in Hamilton. The proposed development will comprise a 1100-seat flexible lyric theatre constructed over split levels, with a garden area, and it will include a new hotel located on the Victoria Street frontage and an art gallery, to provide views onto the Waikato River.

The archaeological assessment concludes that no known archaeological features or deposits will be majorly affected. However, there is potential for unrecorded archaeological sites to be present sub-surface. The potential relates to the Maori history of the area and partial use as a urupa, as well as the European history from the mid-19th century relating to the Hamilton Hotel and commercial developments on Victoria Street. The site therefore has the potential for archaeological sites and therefore archaeological and Maori values.

The Hamilton District Plan records an urupa named Hua O Te Atua located partly over the Riverbank Reserve and Allotment 53, Town of Hamilton West, at the western end of Sapper Moore-Jones Place and behind the former Hamilton Hotel. The urupa is recorded from oral history and confidential records from the representatives of Ngaati Wairere.

We also note in the assessment that an *Auckland Star* article, dated 12 March 1889 reported that while excavating ‘to the lower floor of Mr J. Harper’s store in Hamilton, lately occupied by Mr Greenwood as a barber’s shop, to the level of the footpath, the workmen came upon skeletons and skulls of three natives.’ Harper’s store was situated within Allotment 52, Town of Hamilton West, neighbouring Allotment 53 and the Hamilton Hotel, and may therefore have been utilised by Maori as part of the Hua O Te Atua urupa, recorded to the south-east.

The design of the Waikato Theatre has considered the location of the scheduled urupa and the majority of the site will not undergo any earthworks, only vegetation clearance and piling works on the northern and southern edge of the urupa area to support part of the open courtyard deck and an access ramp. The courtyard deck has been redesigned to create a large void in the deck around an existing tree and therefore avoid a significant portion of the urupa. The design also uses screw piles for the least impact on the site and the foundation beams will be above ground to minimise impact. The eastern side of the scheduled urupa area is within a future proposed Upper River Promenade and a separate project.

## **Consultation with Mana Whenua**

Thawk was introduced to the project in May 2018, visited the site and previous urupa named Te Hua o te Atua’ in June 2018. Since then thawk has begun working/consulting with project management, archaeologists, architects and others in order to identify the appropriate mitigatory measures and implementation timeframes over the life of the project. The appropriate cultural protocols and ceremonial activities necessarily associated with maintaining cultural safety, is still to be agreed between Waikato Regional Theatre Governance Panel and THAWK (including Waikato Tainui). This Heritage New Zealand Authority application being the first in that process.

We have read and reviewed the archaeological assessment report (Phear et al Oct 2018) and the Archaeological Management Plan (AMP) for the project (Tatton and Clough Apr 2019). The protocols and site management outlined in the AMP that must be adhered to if archaeological remains of Maori origin are exposed are endorsed by THAWK.

## **Recommendations**

- THAWK support the resource consent application on condition that ongoing participation, consultation and involvement of THAWK is ensured in all phases of the project. This includes the sharing of information about the project as it becomes available, which will allow THAWK to amend or make recommendation based on new information.
- THAWK supports the Heritage New Zealand Authority application for the construction of the Waikato Theatre.
- THAWK endorses the protocols and site management outlined in the AMP should archaeological remains of Maori origin be discovered during the construction of the Waikato Theatre.
- THAWK will provide ongoing cultural support, cultural induction, cultural safety and advice for the project management, contractors and archaeologists on site. In carrying out the requirements of the authority the archaeologists will be guided by THAWK representatives in matters of tikanga.